HERI AFRICA
HARNESSING EDUCATION RESEARCH FOR IMPACT IN AFRICA

KISII UNIVERSITY

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS: 2026/2027 LANGUAGE EDUCATION POSTGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS IN FOUNDATIONAL LITERACY

1. Introduction

The Language Education Research Chair in Kisii University invites applications for postgraduate studies from suitably qualified candidates for a competitive research scholarship in Foundational Literacy under the Harnessing Education Research for Impact in Africa (HERI-Africa) programme. HERI Africa is a Pan-African initiative designed to revitalize Africa-led, university-based education research. Its primary goal is to boost the continent's contribution to global educational research from the current 3% to 30% by 2050. HERI Africa strives to strengthen Kenya's education research system to deliver credible, relevant evidence that informs policy formulation, practice, and improves learning outcomes.

2. Scope

The successful candidates for the Master's and Doctorate programmes are expected to carry out research that is aligned to one or more of the following key thematic areas. However, the sub-themes under the broad thematic areas are not exhaustive. Therefore, students will be encouraged to develop research ideas aligned to foundational literacy perspectives within the African context.

a) **Mother-Tongue and Bilingual Literacy:** Developing children's' foundational literacy skills in mother-tongue and transitioning to subsequent languages.
b) **Teacher Mentorship and Coaching:** Structured support networks for foundational literacy educators, innovative, context-adapted classroom strategies to boost literacy learning outcomes.
c) **Home and Community Engagement:** Parental capacity building for shared reading, storytelling, and singing with children during the early years of schooling by use of weekly SMS prompts and discussion topics to guide home literacy activities.
d) **EdTech and AI Integration:** Deployment of high-quality digital tools and educational games to enhance children's foundational literacy learning outcomes, utilization of AI-tools for children's personalized reading practices to improve children's' reading fluency.
e) **Communities of Practice (CoPs):** Empowering teachers through shared learning and evidence-based methods to improve early years' foundational literacy instruction. Driving improvement in foundational literacy instruction through peer observations, collaborative material creation, and assessment strategies.
f) **Pedagogy and Teacher Education:** Literacy Pedagogy, Pre-Service Teacher Training: Aligning teacher training curricula with the science of reading and literacy assessment.

3. Eligibility Criteria

To be considered for a postgraduate scholarship, applicants must meet the Kisii University postgraduate admission criteria as outlined below:

Master's Applicants

- Applicants for a Master's degree programmes should have a minimum of a Second Class Honours Upper Division degree in the following programmes: Bachelor of Education – Arts (with specializations in English and Literature or Kiswahili with any other combination); Bachelor of Education - Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE); Bachelor of Education - Special Needs Education (with specializations in English and Literature or Kiswahili with any other combination) from Kisii University or equivalent qualifications from institutions recognized by the Kisii University Senate
  or
- Applicants with a Second Class Honours Lower Division degree in the following programmes: Bachelor of Education - Arts (with specializations in English and Literature or Kiswahili with any other combination); Bachelor of Education - Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE); Bachelor of Education - Special Needs Education (with specializations in English and Literature or Kiswahili with any other combination) and at least two (2) years of relevant experience in language education, literacy programme delivery, or a related field.
- Must be below the age of 30 years.

Doctorate Applicants

- The applicants for the Doctor of Philosophy should hold a relevant Master's degree from Kisii University or an accredited institution that is recognized by the Kisii University Senate.
- In addition, the applicants should submit a research concept paper aligned to the Foundational Literacy thematic areas specified in this call to demonstrate that they are capable of carrying out original research.
- Must be a newly admitted or continuing postgraduate student at Kisii University.
- Must be below the age of 35 years

NOTE

- **Women and persons living with disabilities (PWDs) are strongly encouraged to apply.**
- Shortlisted candidates will be subjected to a suitability placement interview.

4. Scholarship Benefits

Successful candidates will receive comprehensive support, which includes:

- **Monthly stipend:** A modest monthly student stipend support.
- **Research Grants:** Some funds to support fieldwork, data collection, and thesis writing.
- **Conference participation and publication support:** Support for conference participation and journal publication expenses.
- **Supervision support:** Supervision guidance from subject matter experts.

5. **Application Requirements**

Applicants should submit the following documents in PDF format:

- **Master's applicants:** Certified copy of Bachelor's degree certificate; certified academic transcripts for the undergraduate study, secondary school and primary school education certificates.
- **Doctorate applicants:** Certified copy of Master's degree certificate, certified academic transcripts, secondary school and primary school education certificates, and a two-page doctoral research concept.
- Reference letters from two academic referees.

6. **Application Process and Deadline**

Application Stage	**Date**
Issuance of Call	27 July 2026
Deadline for Applications	14 August 2026
Notification of Results	24 August 2026
Program Commencement	September 2026

Proposals received after the deadline will not be considered.

7. **Application Procedure**

- Application forms are obtained from the Kisii University Admissions Office upon payment of a non-refundable application fee of Kshs.2, 000 for postgraduate degree programmes. The forms are also obtained through our website www.kisiiuniversity.ac.ke which will be filled and submitted together with an original bank pay-in-slip application fee in favour of Kisii University at any branch of the following banks.

- National Bank of Kenya, Account No: 01230035009000
- Cooperative Bank of Kenya, Account No: 01129297079400
- Kenya Commercial Bank, Account No: 1148599398

- The duly completed forms should be returned to:
  The Registrar – Academic Affairs, Kisii University,
  P. O. Box 408 Code 40200, KISII.
- Attach copies of relevant certificates, transcripts, passport size photograph and the original application fee receipt.

For further information, call
Main Campus: 0720875 082 Or Visit the Main Campus.
Email: admissions@kisiiuniversity.ac.ke, acregistrar@kisiiuniversity.ac.ke
Website: www.kisiiuniversity.ac.ke